

ETHOS



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MONDAY

Claire Kearney, '69

It's raining out. I'm sitting here at my desk looking out the window. I picked up an old Humpty Dumpty magazine the kids left on the floor and for no reason at all I thought of Michael.

I'm married. I have children. Oh, God. This is stupid. Why am I writing this? I'm not an emotional little adolescent pouring out her feelings into lousy poetry. I just . . . There's no one I can talk to. It's funny how you can be married and still have thoughts which you can never talk to anyone about. It is funny how you can sit and have a drink together and he says, "How was your day?" and you say, "Fine. Yours?" "O.K.," he'll say. "Anything special happen?" he'll ask. "No, just the usual. You?" "No," he'll say. "Typical routine." Nothing happens. Nothing, at least, that you can strap words to.

I guess it's the rain that reminds me of the day I left Michael. I was sitting in the living room on the coffee table. We didn't have any chairs. I saw the rain and the house across the street — grey with green trim and all dark. It was winter. My life fell apart.

Who remembers the time, the building up, the little things happening to you? Climbing the monkey bars in the playground, feeding ducks, riding a bus? Loud parties and greasy pizzas and fudge-nut ice cream on Sunday afternoon? It's on you before you know. He tells you he loves you. You are silent. But he looks for your answer. And it's very hard to say. But then you say it, and you admit it's true. And you both are very happy and every-

thing is beautiful. And it's true when you say it. It's only later . . .

I lived with him in an apartment on Hitchcock Street for nine months. It's true. I did it. Yet it's so unreal to me now. I'm a different person now. Not really, I suppose, but it seems that way. Why is it when you fall in love that you cannot admit to yourself that you ever cared for anyone else at all? Each man is the first one. And he is the first that you ever knew or ever smiled with or ever touched.

In the evening after supper he read me from the Sonnets and Donne.

And now good morrow to our waking souls,
Which watch not one another out of fear
For love all love of other sights controls,
And makes one little room an everywhere.

He sat against the wall, propped up on a bed pillow, and I lay on the floor by his feet. I watched his face when he read. The one lamp we had gave off a weak light, and there were always shadows dancing about his eyes. That's what I remember most — the shadows. Lying on the floor, his lips looked upside down to me and moved rapidly without seeming to form the words, like a marionette's. I used to smile at this. Once, I laughed out loud, and he looked up from the book disturbed, so I didn't do it anymore. I kept the laugh inside me. He was a very intense person. In everything.

It's funny to think now of how little we had. Materially, I mean. Things that seem like such essentials now. I cooked on an old gas range.

Only one burner worked, and the oven was temperamental. The toaster was the kind whose sides flipped open, and you had to turn over the bread to toast the other side. We were poor, really. Neither of us worked though. We both kept going to school. He went because he loved it. I just went to please my parents. They had no idea about what I was doing. Oh Lord. Mother and Dad. They would have been so shocked. Poor mother with her bridge club and Women's Auxiliary and her Opera Boosters. She would have died.

I was very happy with him. Happy doing things for him. Things that I never had to do at home. He read quite a lot. Sometimes he stayed up all night reading. In the beginning, I tried to make him come to bed but he ignored me. Gently, of course. "Just this chapter," he would say, or, "Only a few more pages." After a while I gave up. My God, when I think of the crumby little things I did for him. Housework. He never helped. He was that kind of a person. Just didn't think of things like food and clothing. He would eat whatever I put on the table whether it was hamburg or a roast beef dinner. All the same.

I don't know why I was happy. I guess it was because I wasn't alone any more. He didn't have many friends either. Just one, really — Gordon who came over quite a lot. They talked about religions and poets, Oriental philosophies. Things that I had never heard.

On Saturdays sometimes, we would take the bus to Glendale. The ride was rather long, two fares, but I enjoyed it. I loved to sit by the window and watch the way the city thinned out. To go from the noise to the quiet. As we went along, the tenements became farther apart. Brownstone became brick and then small houses and then bigger ones. I even knew where the sidewalk stopped. After passing the city limit you became aware of green. It crept up suddenly. You'd be riding along with the sun on your face and on the brown leather seat and then it would be shady and so much quieter. Even the horns of cars had a muffled sound. There weren't many people on the streets either. Not like in the city where they sit on the front steps in groups.

When the bus got to Orchard Street, we always got out. It stopped right beside McCormack's Apothecary, and we used to walk in and have a coke at the counter. There were never too many people there. It was a lazy little place, really. The owner didn't seem to mind that business wasn't booming.

There was a reservoir at the end of Orchard Street. It had a few picnic tables and trash barrels, but they never looked used. And there were so many trees. I even remember that we had a special spot that we called ours. It was up on a little hill in the midst of an island of trees. The first time we found it I remember that we had to dig out a rock so we could put the blanket down. I brought it home to use as a doorstep.

We always ate the lunch I packed right when we got there. He would take his shirt off and sit with his knees pulled up watching the water. It was peaceful. After lunch, we would walk — sometimes along the shore, sometimes through the trees. He led the way, stopping now and then to touch a rock or watch a squirrel or listen to some bird's cry. And he would always look back at me and smile. Like a little kid discovering something. I can see him holding a pine cone out to me with a big smile on his face. I was very happy.

Rain, rain, rain. Oh, I wish it would stop. I never see any people when it's raining. Not even very many cars going by. It's so quiet. And lonely.

Where is the beginning of the end? So many things happen that you never see. No. You see them, but you don't pay attention at the time, because you create your own world for yourself, and you block out the things which do not go. Only afterwards, when the end is absolutely sure, you see the little things which were always there.

I remember I was sitting on the coffee table with a pen in my hand and a piece of notebook paper. My suitcase was all packed. I was trying to write a note to him, but the paper was blank. All I could do was stare out the window. He was at a lecture with Gordon. The funny thing was I could sit there and just know what would happen in an hour if things went on as usual. He and Gordon would come in, and they would be discussing the lecture. He'd say to me, "Hello, Charlotte," and they would go into the living room and talk. And I would want to try to do something for him. I would want to cook a good dinner or just make them a sandwich, but I know what he would say. "Not right now. We're not hungry just now." So I would go into my bedroom and read. And in a couple of hours when Gordon left, I would want to talk to him. I don't know what I would say. I would want to tell him about how I sat watching the water splash from the gutter or how a raindrop slid down the windowpane or how I had missed him that afternoon. But it would have sounded silly when I started to

say it. Anyway, he would want to read. So there was nothing to mark down on the paper, really, nothing I could put into words, into an ordered outline. No cause and effect. No "if A, then B." Just feelings. Feelings that I did not understand, so how could I hope that he would?

It was getting dark, and I had to catch the six o'clock bus. I took the paper and wrote in large letters across it, "Good-bye, Michael,"

and left it on the coffee table under the ash-tray. Then I remember looking around at the living room and seeing the rock up against the door, and then I left.

The rain's stopped. Good Lord, is that the school bus already? I haven't even thought about supper. Nothing's defrosted. Well, maybe we can have soup. Good night for it. Then, if Jim isn't too tired, he and the boys can build a fire, and we'll toast marshmallows.

A.M. March 9th

I'm
squatting
on the Sunday Times
balancing
a king-size ash tray
on shaky knees
searching for dingers
while the alley breeze
kicks a Rheingold
across linoleum and broken glass
and the clock
ticking
in the wastebasket
says
it's time.

Nancy Vaughan, '70



Josephine Cavallo, '71

FAMINE

Assume that hunger feeds on all of us
making our searching feet rust away.
What will we do with our billowing clothes?
With what will we fill the hollows of our body?
I had hoped for three days that the media
were right,
but when I saw the reapers slicing dust
and tying sheaves of nothing with rotting twine
I knew that women would soon bear corpses.
Logic fails, my dear my dear,
Hunger finished our meal for us
and left our Ming plates empty.

Nancy Brady, '71

CHESS GAME FOR ONE

We met worthy of one another
and pledged an oath
of folly —
now I want to know
what for.
All I've said should have been
written in wind and running water
and when you receive
a rained-on letter in jerky script
bear my thoughts.
I am dull before you;
I am the vulture waiting
for your head.
I love you nakedly and complete
(wouldn't you know—it's all the same)
knowing that
tomorrow—in a middle-of-the-game fashion—
I'm going to beg the universe
to let me be
and wonder whether the hour-glass
three-minute egg timer is keeping time
Okay.

Donna Russo, '70

Horace as Horace: Some Critical Approaches

Janice Moody, '70

Horace is one of the two most widely known and best loved poets of Latin literature. In this modern age of the fine arts where "art for art's sake" has become a major school of thought, Horace's *Odes*, his best poetic work, become more relevant.

There are several approaches one might pursue in reading Horace's *Odes*. The best way is to sit down and read them out loud in the original Latin. Since this is not always possible the most obvious thing to do would be to read an English translation. A third step would be to read a criticism of the *Odes* hoping to gain some insight into his style and purpose. One should never present Horace in such a confining approach that the reader will feel that this is all that can be either said or done with his poetry. Despite the 2,000 year span between Horace and the reader he should never feel that the poetry has been closed to any new discussion or translation. There are several excellent books of translation and criticism which give the reader a warm and open introduction to Horace the poet. It is my purpose here to present the reader with two such valuable works which will invite him to read Horace's *Odes*.

Robert Frost once defined poetry as "what gets lost in translation." How can a person hope to gain any insight into the poetry of Horace if he has little or no knowledge of the Latin language? All good poetry has an intrinsic value and it is better to read a translation than not to read the poem at all. So it is in the case of Horace.

However, in reading a translation one must be selective. In order for a translation to be effective it must convey the original concepts

and imagery while at the same time keep as close to the metrical structure as possible. It is difficult to reproduce in English a poem which reveals as much as possible of the original work. James Michie in his book *The Odes of Horace* has come very close to keeping 'what is lost' minimal. One reason for this is that he has included the complete Latin text next to his translation. This is valuable to every reader regardless of his degree of knowledge of Latin. The Latin scholar can read with a more critical eye and thus compare the aesthetic value of both the original and the translation. On the other hand, Michie's book provides a reading guide for the person with less knowledge of Latin, so that he can enjoy Horace's thoughts, style and images as such. With the Latin directly opposite the English, he is able to match up phrases and compare the way in which both poet and translator express the same thought. One can see how important it is to have a good translation available. A poor translation may so transform the images and concepts that one is left not with a poem of Horace but with the translator's show of virtuosity. The translation will fail in its main objective: to capture Horace as Horace.

James Michie's translations have succeeded in conveying the poetry of Horace to his English reader. He has kept to the same basic structure and metrical rhythm as far as this is possible. Horace's *Odes* are noted for their simplicity of language. Yet what Horace can say in three or four words is often very difficult to express in the same number of English words. However, Michie has succeeded in producing a style similar to Horace, as effective in English as it is in Latin. This is illus-

trated in the opening stanza of Ode IX, Book I:

Look how the snow lies deeply on glittering
Soracto. White woods groan and protest-
ingly

Let fall their branch-loads. Bitter frost has
Paralysed rivers: the ice is solid.

Vides ut alta stet nive candidum
Soracte, nec iam sustineant onus
silvae laborantes, geluque
flumina constiterint acute.

What makes this translation effective is Michie's ability to capture and convey Horace's meaning into English while maintaining a rhythmic structure similar to the Latin. Thus, the reader's appreciation of both the Latin and English poetry is deepened. All one has to do is read an ode out loud first in English and then in Latin (regardless of one's familiarity with Latin) and one will *hear* the similarity. It is precisely this essential audial quality that is missing in many translations. And it is because Michie has been able to capture both meaning and rhythm in a poetic form similar to the Latin that one is able to love and appreciate the poetry of Horace in an English translation.

Just as there are many different translations of Horace's *Odes*, so are there many critical works written on his poetry. Once again, it is important for the reader to be selective in his approach to learning more about Horace through other scholars' interpretations. In dealing with poetry of any language foreign to the reader, there might often be a tendency to shy away from scholarly criticisms due either to one's own limited knowledge of the language itself or to a technical approach useful only to the person who has mastered that language. Any critical work should provide an intellectual stimulus to read the work itself and at the same time help direct one's approach to Horace without becoming either too narrow or too general in scope. David West has written such a book which is an invitation to reading Horace, appropriately titled *Reading Horace*. Regardless of whether this will be one's first or fiftieth reading of Horace's *Odes*, much can be gained through this book. West is direct in his personal feelings about Horace and this adds considerably to formulating a reaction toward his criticism. West approaches Horace in a polemic manner. It is evident that he feels the majority of modern critics and scholars have failed to see the essential Horace which for West is the poetic Horace. The concept "This poem has

been destroyed by critics," is expressed in different ways throughout the book. However, it is in this light that West adds the variety by which he lets the reader keep an open mind toward Horace's poetry and allows him to evaluate these interpretations for himself.

Briefly, the book is divided into two main parts: part one, on a selection of Epistles; part two, on several of the *Odes*. In both sections West is concerned with the imagery, an approach too often neglected in studying Horace.

What makes this book an extremely well-presented introduction to Horace, is West's concentration on the text of the poem alone, and not on issues surrounding the poems (including those of Horace's personal life). In analyzing Horace's poetry, West does not want to give a narrow interpretation; thus he introduces an abundance of comments by other critics. The reader will particularly like West's directness. He is not interested in giving one an analysis of every single concept in a poem; rather, he deals chiefly with imagery. He keeps this discussion open and varied as exemplified in chapter one, where he analyzes the imagery in Horace's *Soracte* Ode. He is dealing with the major images in the ode and in so doing, he integrates his own interpretation with those of several other critics and also explains how they arrive at the concept they do, whether or not he agrees and why. West treats his study of Horace in both general and specific ways: he goes into much detail of historical concepts of words and whether or not this affects a modern reader's understanding of the text. An interesting example of West's concern with word origins is his discussion in chapter five of Horace's ode ii, Book I. He explains the importance of the metaphor of tree pruning by a literal translation of *resex*: "a technical term of viticulture". He then proceeds with examples of similar metaphors found in Horace's *Ars Poetica*; and in Pliny's *Natural History*. In this way West presents a forceful view of Horace as a poet, for he knows how much variety to give his reader. It is his ability to do this that invites the reader to study Horace further.

Perhaps one can venture to say in reply to Robert Frost's definition of poetry as "what gets lost in translation", that what makes James Michie and David West so successful is the fact that they have captured the essence of Horace — that something which "gets lost in translation."

To a Rose
or
A Thing of Beauty Does Not Last Forever

Chairs of clothes, plenitudes of paper, floors of books — books
out of date, books overdue so
fill my room abundant that

I,

the ego of my consciousness, can hardly squeeze
my footlet
in.

Tribulations, incantations, insinuations from
the clutter of my mind
reach out
to fill the corners of my room.

All color and ilk
just murmuring, feeling
all pinkly and green, soft and graceful
it stands
The Rose.

All golden my room, with rose drippings . . .
A thing of beauty.
But soon, amid the clutter of booklets and Time and things,
Rosedrippings.
Dried.

Susan Stewart, '69



Catherine McDonald, '70

oh god, laughing

she kept on laughing
oh god laughing
that rasps raw in my brain
like flesh on redbrick
 on fire
I screamed through skinned lips
at her laughing spinning red
to the music's scream
to the dancing
flash of her laugh on fire
flailing burns through my brain
laughing oh god
scorching red, red as blood
on my hand beating,
 beating
to the music
to the screams of the music
as she spun crying red-raw
like flesh on redbrick grating
me beating,
 beating
until she stopped.

Marylinda Poule, '70

THE URIZEN

Diane Roche, '71

There was an expectant wave of coughing and throat-clearing among the few parishioners at the seven o'clock Mass as Father James finished the gospel. The familiar sound had always amused him making him feel like a farmer flashing a lantern in a sleeping chicken-coop. He had to smile at the aptness of the comparison. Many of the souls before him did belong to tough old birds: one or two neighborhood drunks trying to keep warm; the school janitor and his wife, (a hard-headed, stout-bodied Irish woman who worked on Sundays to send her son through college); and Old Roxie, who didn't do much except mutter and whistle to himself. As for their

being sleepy, who could doubt it? The soft rustling died down as Father James' bald head and square shoulders rose into place behind the railing of the platform.

"My dear friends in Christ," he began. Although there wasn't a sound in the basement chapel, the priest paused and meditatively removed a few grains of sleep from the corner of his eye. His voice, when he resumed, had a thoughtful, almost weary tone. "In today's gospel, Jesus said something which, as your pastor, I have always taken very personally. He said 'suffer the little children to come unto Me.' In other words, you might say Christ was asking the adults of his day to help the youngsters receive his grace and teachings. Now I don't have to tell you that many things are not the same today as they were in Christ's time or even as they were twenty years ago . . . "

Were they listening? His many years as a Redemptorist had made him extraordinarily aware of his congregation as an audience. In the past he had been known to talk so convincingly of heaven and hell that there were tears in the eyes of old women. His grammar school missions had invariably aroused armies of angry mothers, whose children had suddenly become victims of guilt-ridden nightmares. But today it was hard to tell what effect, if any, his words had upon the few silent people who broke the monotony of the empty pews. The only response came from a door at the back of the chapel which groaned slightly as a youngster from the elementary school slipped in late for Mass. She settled into one of the back pews as Father James' voice broke upon the air in a sudden wrathful crescendo, strangely dynamic for so old a man.

"Why I can remember when this chapel was full from the overflow of the main church ev-er-y sin-gle Mass on Sunday." He punctuated this statement by bringing his closed fist down sharply on the worn railing. But he felt himself beginning to ramble and checked himself. "Nevertheless there are a few absolutes that don't change, and one of them is the duty of the Christian adult to expose his child to Christ's teachings. The good sisters are doing their best over in the grammar school, but the truth is that unless something happens, we may be forced to shut down. It's one thing for someone to come up to me and say, 'That's a fine school you've got there Father,' and another for him to cough up money for paper and books."

The pastor looked out over the congregation. His eyes told him that the school was not

the only part of the parish in need of money. By strict budgeting he had kept the upper church in good repair, but there was just not enough left over for the chapel. The coat of light grey paint which had once camouflaged the network of waterpipes overhead now only made them more conspicuous by its extensive flaking and peeling. Water seepage had left white streaks of limestone in several places along the wall. Father James returned his attention to the congregation. He knew he was getting through. However, the people were well matched to the parish, needing money just as badly themselves, and he knew that the very ones who would give an extra dollar in that day's collection might go without lunch tomorrow. With a mixture of anger and despair he concluded, "And so this morning we are asking you good people to respond as generously as you have always done in the past to the annual school drive which will be taken up at the second collection of today's Mass." As he turned to descend the stairs from the pulpit, the congregation rose in anticipation of the Creed, creating a low, assenting rumble which mercifully drowned out both the creaking of the stairs and Father James' old bones.

Later in the sacristy it was hard for him to recall any part of his Mass after the brief sermon. He supposed he had continued reciting the familiar liturgy to the satisfaction of those few people who had been listening, for whenever he omitted anything they inevitably let him know about it. This having the Mass in English, he thought, was an invasion of his rights, and in a stubborn, perhaps unconscious show of defiance he continued reciting the English phrases with the old Latinate intonation. Some of the younger parishioners complained, but the older ones found it strangely comforting, for with a little imagination they could believe they were back in the old days. The elderly women who continued to nod and finger their rosaries during Mass no matter who said it, found him less distracting. Eventually the young people just stopped coming to his Masses altogether and flocked instead to the eleven or five o'clock which were said by Father Touchette, a new priest in his early thirties.

They'll go to him alright . . . don't have to get up early . . . don't have to fast in Lent . . . don't have to go to Mass unless they feel like it. It's plenty easy to go to him, and Lord knows they all do. These thoughts came to the old man in a surprising rush of resentment.

He turned his eyes on Father Touchette who was at that moment casually rinsing out the ciborium and chalice. He handles them like he was a waiter in a Hayes-Bickford, he thought.

It was true that everything Father Touchette did, from saying Mass to coaching basketball, he did in an off-hand manner which had endeared him to one half of the parish and alienated him from the other. He often stopped in the middle of the liturgy to direct newcomers to seats up front or to ask someone to open a window if the church was stuffy. His sermons were extemporaneous and ran more like Johnny Carson monologues than instructive homilies, although they usually made their point. On top of it all he had a nervous habit of playing with his vestments while speaking, twirling the tasselled cincture so that it sent the younger children into fits of giggles.

Now with quick, impatient movement he wiped the cruets with a dish cloth, replaced them in the polished cabinet, and flicked the door shut. Without a word he walked over to his superior and began untying the knots which Father James' arthritic fingers had been working at for at least ten minutes.

"Father Touchette, have you done anything about that sign yet? It gives newcomers a pretty poor impression of St. Anne's when they can't even read the name of the church through the dirt."

"Yes Father, I had a group of boys from the confraternity class give it a good scrubbing yesterday afternoon, but I'm afraid it needs more than just a washing. A lot of that grey is really baked on there, and some of the gold is coming off. What we really need is a new sign." He worked as he talked, helping the pastor out of his alb and chasuble, hanging them carefully back in the closet. He noticed that some of the gold was coming off the vestments too.

"Well then, I suggest you take up a second collection at the eleven for that purpose, unless maybe you'd rather hold a raffle before the offertory."

The practice of taking up a second collection was a point of friction between them, and although Father James knew it was childish of him to broach the subject in that manner, he did not regret it. He waited to get a rise out of the young priest as a child waits for a kitten to pounce at a dangled string. But before Father Touchette could respond there was a light tapping at the sacristy door.

"Come in, Come in," Father James called irritably. The door opened, and he recognized

the red corduroys and plaid dress of the girl who had come in late. She looked like any of the other children in the parish, with their huge eyes and round faces, but he knew her as the youngest Fallon. He had seen her parents move into the parish fifteen years ago when the oldest was six. Mrs. Fallon had been in her middle twenties then, and still in possession of that delicate, poor-house beauty he had seen so often back in Kentucky. The pale blue eyes, shy smile and fragile skin that collapsed so quickly into the wrinkles of age had brought back memories of his home and he had made a point of getting to know the young couple. They had returned his interest by every year insisting that he have the honor of baptising their latest. It had been a long time since the last Baptism, but they still invited him to dinner occasionally, and he always accepted. Today he was particularly relieved to see the girl but her impatient discomfort made it obvious that the feeling was not mutual. She smiled at Father Touchette, her face an echo of her mother's in Father James' eyes.

"Well now, it's Karen isn't it? What can I do for you?" The question was a mere formality as was the child's murmured reply.

"My mother wants to know if you'd have Sunday dinner with us." Karen hated having to deliver this message, but being the youngest and most recently baptised she always got to do it. She was afraid that Father James would call her over and make her sit on his knee while he asked her if she'd been good or if she'd said her prayers. Or worse, he might ask her what she had learned at Mass that morning or why she had been late. How was she to know that Michael Harrigan would drop the whole pile of Sunday papers and that she would have to help him pick them up? Michael was her boy friend, all her friends said so. After all, hadn't she kissed his hand once when he had shown her the bruised knuckle he'd won in a fight? And then there was the black bottle cap he had given her Friday just before recess. She guessed that must make her his official girl friend. How would she ever be able to explain all that to Father James? He might tell her she had committed a mortal sin by kissing Michael's hand and then she would have to die like the little girl in one of his sermons whose casket had turned red. Her mother would cry and her whole family would follow her casket out of the dark church. These thoughts filled her with terror and kept her from crossing the threshold into the sacristy. Father Touchette's

voice broke in upon her thoughts as if from another world.

"Hey carrot-top, come on in. We won't eat you, you know." When Karen still looked doubtful, he bent down, grabbed her by the waist and scooped her up over his head, tickling until her delighted screams echoed throughout the whole church. "Hey, you're getting heavy, you know that? You must weigh at least five hundred pounds. What'll Michael think?"

"I weigh fifty-eight," Karen answered, catching her breath. She wondered how he knew about Michael, but then he always knew everything about everyone. Somehow his knowing made everything alright. She knew he would not say she had committed a mortal sin. Why couldn't her mother invite him instead of Father James, who had deep red grooves on either side of his nose from his gold rimmed glasses. It was useless to complain though, for whenever anyone said anything against the pastor her parents would tell them it was not their place to criticize the Church. As children they were expected to be obedient and respectful to all adults, especially nuns or priests, "and not another word about it."

Father Touchette left, saying something about eating breakfast which reminded Karen that she had not yet had hers. Father James stood in his long black cassock, stole in hand, looking out the door after him.

"Father?"

"Oh, yes child, what is it?"

"Mother says to come any time after twelve. We'll be eating around one."

His mind had been far away, but with a little effort it returned to the more pleasant matter at hand. "Tell your mother 'Thank you very much' I'll be there at twelve."

"Yes Father." Karen nodded and slipped out quickly through the same door as Father Touchette.

But neither the old man's mood nor his self-imposed schedule would allow him the luxury of quiet, Sunday-morning thoughts. As the door closed behind Karen, Father James forced his mind on the immediate issues of back correspondence and bookkeeping. Ever since "Old Gorm" had passed away Father James had reserved these morning hours after the seven o'clock Mass for that purpose, rather than hire a new bookkeeper. "Old Gorm," a retired lawyer, had done it free.

You just don't get men like that these days, Father James mused as he got out the ledgers.

All too busy with their own affairs. Gotta go out and make it big. I'd like to know who they think is going to help them do it. Why in 1945 there were over 158 men in the nocturnal adoration society! But you'd never get the men today to believe they needed any kind of help that wasn't made of green paper. Not that it doesn't help, he added, as his eyes scanned the red and black columns.

"You know, Lord," he said out loud, gazing through the mock gothic archway leading to the altar, "there ought to be some way we could trade some of what we've got for a little of what they've got."

Upstairs, children were already arriving for the nine o'clock Mass. He could hear the shuffling overhead. The nine used to be his favorite Mass. The nuns would always arrive fifteen minutes early, prepared to sort the children into grades and usher them into the correct pews so that by nine sharp he could come onto the altar and look out over one hundred and ten alternating rows of boys and girls from grades one through twelve. It used to fill him with a pleasant feeling of order and efficiency, like the captain of a tightly-run ship. In the last few years though, since they closed down the high school, he had handed over all the later Masses to the younger priests, preferring the early Masses himself. He woke at five-thirty every morning now anyway.

Sister Miriam Pat arrived with a pot of fresh coffee.

"Sister, would you tell Mrs. Murphy that I won't be having dinner at the rectory this afternoon. I'll be at the Fallons' in case anybody needs me."

"Yes Father," Sister murmured.

At eleven-fifteen Father James awoke with a start to the sound of laughter in the upper church. The pot of coffee sat cold and untouched on the side table while the books and unanswered letters lay sprawled on the desk before him. His neck was stiff and his whole body was painfully protesting the awkward position in which sleep had overtaken him. His annoyance with himself was transferred to the most likely cause of the laughter which had waked him.

"Touchette," he muttered, attempting to stand. "Up there making a monkey out of himself as usual."

A letter lay on the floor at his feet, and with a great effort he bent to pick it up. But as his fingers reached out for it, it seemed the whole floor tilted away from him, and the desk

crashed against his head so hard that black spots appeared on the walls and ceiling. He felt a strange tide rising against his will behind his eyes, and he realized in surprise that if he didn't do something someone would come in and find the pastor of the parish down crying on his hands and knees.

"I think I'll take a bit of a walk," he said with hard-won control, and climbed back to his feet. He forced himself to drink a little of the coffee and straightened up the desk. Underneath the long black cassock he was fully dressed in the black shirt and pants which he always wore in public. He disapproved of Father Touchette's notorious habit of running around in faded plaid shorts and a tee shirt, even though the Church permitted it now. He walked carefully over to the sink in the corner and splashed some cold water on his face. Except for the dull aching above his left eye he felt much better. The thought of his invitation suddenly occurred to him and he seized upon it gratefully, pushing everything else out of his mind — the books, Father Touchette — his fall — everything except the fact that he was going someplace where people wanted him.

He was humming to himself five minutes later as he opened the outside door to the lower sacristy. For a moment he stood in the open doorway, allowing his eyes to grow accustomed to the brilliant light reflecting off the snow. A few drops from the overhanging gutter splashed onto his head and trickled down the back of his neck into the stiff collar. As he emerged from the shallow stairwell onto the sidewalk another wave of laughter came from the open window. Father James turned and looked at his church with its grey, almost illegible sign.

"Just as long as he gets the money, Lord," he murmured.

He took his time getting to the Fallons' for the day was one of those warm suggestions of spring which cause memories and promises to rise out of every puddle and Father James had to stop and listen to them all. There was the pungent aroma of the burned-out drug store in whose sooty basement a crowd of children could be heard playing house. Clark children he wondered, until he remembered they had long since grown up and ceased playing house. He tried to get a glimpse of the children as he passed, but he could not see beyond the rotting paper bags of garbage that stuffed the basement windows. One of them had ripped open, strewing orange peels

and eggshells across the sidewalk. He continued on, stopping to stare at the vacant lot where the old Hotel Commodore had stood, and nodding to the few familiar faces he saw.

He never had breakfast in Lent and now the exertion of his walk combined with the earth-odors in the damp air was creating in him an appetite which he hadn't felt in years. He began to anticipate what his afternoon at the Fallons' would be like. He pictured their brown and yellow, three-family house, its small, hedged-in front yard strewn with toys. He would ring the bell and Mrs. Fallon would answer, all dressed up, but with her hair curling in stray wisps about her face from the steamy heat of the kitchen. In his imagining, the old man was not careful where he stepped and by the time he reached Gorham Avenue his feet were thoroughly soaked. A brisk wind had sprung up and was scuttling a few light grey clouds across the sun. But the sight of the Fallons' house nestled so immovably among the neighbors' filled Father James with warmth. It was all so familiar to him: the old police station on the corner, the battered trash cans set out for Monday's collection, even the hard-packed short cuts of the children through the sliding field looked as if they had been laid out with the same blue-print year after year.

As he started up the front walk his eye caught a movement from behind one of the lace curtains in the window, followed by a high pitched cry, "Mother, Father James is here."

He smiled and rang the doorbell anyway. In a moment there came an answering buzz and Father turned the brass knob and stepped into the warm front entry. It was rich with the mingled aromas of pot roast, broiled chicken and something else which he couldn't identify. Immediately the door to their apartment opened and there was Mrs. Fallon just as he had pictured her, the hair a little greyer perhaps, but just as stubborn in its refusal to stay pinned in place. She was smiling and making much of him, issuing orders to this child and that, to get the table set or bring Father a cup of hot tea.

"Would you like a little brandy in that tea, Father? You look a bit tired. Say, that's one heck of a bump you've got there!"

This came from Mr. Fallon who emerged, grinning, from a side room, holding a section of the Sunday paper in one hand and extending the other. They shook hands briefly. Mr. Fallon's remark annoyed Father James. He

had pictured himself coming in so rosy-cheeked and healthy from his walk that Mrs. Fallon would exclaim about how well he was looking instead of fussing about the bump as she was doing now. Her deft movements brought back that feeling of inevitable submission he had felt earlier. Mr. Fallon was sent off for some ice while Father James was installed in a big overstuffed chair. He watched Mr. Fallon's light frame disappear into the kitchen with a feeling that was almost hostile. He wished he could do something about his wet feet but his pride prevented him from saying anything.

"I noticed a rather exotic odor as I came in just now. I hope you haven't spent all day cooking up something special."

Mrs. Fallon laughed. "You know I couldn't get this family to eat anything except meat and potatoes even if I tried. No, that's from the Filipino family that moved in last month. They're very dark, you know. We actually thought they were colored. As a matter of fact there is a colored family moved in right across the street. It's amazing the changes that can take place in a neighborhood, even in just one year!"

Father James knew she was just making small talk but it was making him uncomfortable, so he changed the subject. "Say, didn't I read somewhere about Chris winning some kind of scholarship?"

"That's right, Father. To Our Lady's College over in Hadderville. Full tuition and she can commute from here so room and board won't be any problem. For a while there she had her heart set on Ivymont down in New York. But her father finally put his foot down. We told her it was a Catholic college or no college. Besides she would've had to board at Ivymont. This way she can stay home with us."

Father James was pleased with this line of conversation and continued asking questions about the children. "Now your oldest boy, Jackie. He must be out of T.P.I. by now. Why it seems just yesterday I finished baptizing the last one and next thing you know you'll be asking me to marry the first." The pastor chuckled to himself, but he didn't miss the look that the parents exchanged. "Why, now, Jackie doesn't really have his eye on anyone special yet, does he?"

Mr. Fallon lifted his eyebrows and took a deep breath before he began. "It's beginning to look that way, Father. As a matter of fact, that's one of the reasons we wanted you to be here this afternoon . . ."

Just then a girl about sixteen appeared in the doorway. "Dinner's ready," she announced, casually wiping her hands on her apron.

"Thank you, dear," her mother answered. "Someone please go call Jackie and then I guess we're ready to eat."

For a few moments Fallons ambled, sauntered, and scrambled noisily into the dining room, laughing, tripping over each other and scraping chairs. The ruckus finally subsided long enough for Father James to say grace.

For a while the conversation centered upon the younger children but suddenly, sometime around dessert, Father James remembered about Jackie. "Well son, your parents tell me you're planning to get married."

He was startled by the profound effect of his innocent statement. The two youngest stopped playing with leftovers and Ellie, the sixteen-year-old, suddenly excused herself and began to clear away the dinner plates which clattered loudly in the embarrassed silence.

"Uh, yes Father, I am," Jackie finally said. "But I'm not exactly sure how to go about it. You see . . ."

"What is it, the church details you're not sure about? What parish is she from? Just write to them and let them know your plans. One usually gets married from the girl's parish." He had meant this remark to be reassuring in a hearty sort of way but was dismayed at its opposite effect. Mrs. Fallon was looking at her son who just continued staring uncomfortably at his plate.

"But that's the whole problem, Father," he said at last, looking straight at the priest. "She doesn't have a parish. She's Jewish."

The pastor could think of nothing to say. He looked at Mrs. Fallon who smiled in an apologetic sort of way.

"You see, that's what Tim started to explain to you before supper. We wanted Jackie to tell you himself. I . . . we just couldn't. Naturally you've always been the first priest we thought of as marrying any of our children. After all, you baptized them. But we had to know. Will you still do it for us, Father, as a special favor?"

The silence that surrounded Father James at that table of six was far more tense with expectation than any he had faced from a pulpit in his forty-five years as a priest. All his past sermons, counselling and admonishing his people to adhere to the laws of the Church, to be obedient sheep in the flock of Christ came down upon his mind like a curtain of lead. You didn't reason. The Church

knew what was right and you did it. The Church knew what was wrong and you avoided it. It was as simple as that. But suddenly the old priest was very weary. For a moment his soul had fought terribly to find some new way out of this problem which he had solved so finally for others in the past. But the curtain had fallen and now he was too tired even to feel cheated.

"Rose, you know how I feel about mixed marriages," he said finally in a voice so low and weary it could've been lost in the droning of the overhead light had everyone not been so quiet. "They don't work. It just creates another unnecessary area of friction in a union which is precarious enough by its very nature. Without the special grace of the sacrament of Matrimony . . . Well do you think you could've made it this far without His help?" Father James glanced about him. A house blessing hung from the wall over the buffet, and a carved bust of the Virgin gazed solemnly from its place of honor on the mantel. He remembered the satin-robed Infant of Prague statue which had saluted him as he entered. "No," he said softly, "I couldn't be responsible for letting Jackie start off with that many strikes against him."

Ellie, who had been standing in the doorway with an armload of dirty dishes drew her mouth into a straight grim line and disappeared into the kitchen, from which she could be heard noisily unloading the dishes into the sink.

Dessert passed slowly filled with desperate conversation about nothing. The subject of the marriage was not brought up again until just before Father James was ready to leave. As she was helping him into his coat, Mrs. Fallon whispered softly "I'm sorry you can't do it and I understand." He said nothing. Just stared for a moment at her sad delicate smile and nodded. Then Mr. Fallon came in with a gust of cold air, rubbing his hands and stamping his booted feet.

"Listen, Father. I'm awfully sorry about this but someone in this fam-dam-ly left the car radio going and the battery is dead as a stone. I've been trying for the last five minutes to jump-start it, but it's no good."

"We could always call a taxi, dear," Mrs. Fallon suggested, but Father James insisted that the walk would do him good. He was very drowsy. Twice after dinner he had caught himself dozing off and he hoped the cold air would wake him up. Mostly, however, he wanted to be alone.

"Well then, at least let me walk you part way. It's the least I can do," Mr. Fallon declared.

Partly to please Mrs. Fallon and partly to avoid further discussion, Father James consented. Mr. Fallon and the pastor walked silently to the corner of Gorham and Finly. From there it was just a brief walk up a hill past the row of boarded-up stores to the rectory. The two men shook hands again. Then Father James turned and started up the hill. The dampness of the afternoon was beginning to freeze in a thin film on the sidewalk. Each step made the blood pulse painfully strong around the bump over his left eye. He was careful not to turn his head too much as he greeted the storeowners. No need asking for embarrassing questions. What would they think if they found out that their new young

pastor couldn't even pick up a letter without bumping his head. There was Harry McGregor, who ran the fruit store. Really, he should ask him to send any left-over fruit to Mrs. Fallon. She could certainly use it with all those babies to feed. And Mrs. Clark was out spreading sand in front of her husband's drug store. The little boy with the brown paper bag smiled back. Father James looked around. Everything was so clean and neat. These were good people in his parish. He waved and called "Hello" to one or two more. No time to talk now. The nocturnal Adoration Society was having a meeting in an hour and there was something he had to do. Something that tugged uneasily at his memory. What was it? Then the streetlights came on and in their dingy glow Father James saw the chipped letters of St. Anne's and remembered.

THE ROOM

if there were a window to open
somewhere
in this salt-box
it wouldn't be so oppressive
 just trying to see around the table
 is critical

lighting the candles
the table is smaller
faces allude to closeness
with enormous eyes
 wishing this wick-lit minute
 permanence

watching the light flicker on the walls
of expressions
and finding a window across the linen . . .

Judith Power, '70



Lizbet Nash, '70

Foucault Pendulum Series: North Pole

we sunned ourselves on rocks,
we crawled up on the land . . . the wearying
sucking sea.

shipwrecked

our salt-shelled appendages groped for
coral-pits — or the osprey's glossy bite.
feelers useless;
our soulmoult barnacled
to the singing sea-rocks.

We remain.

Dryness floats, wafts us,
As we shed our sandy scales,
And go
Home.

KADDISH

“HERNIOTOMY” or “WHAT IS WOMAN?”

O men, fear your Lord,
who hath created you out
of one man, and out of
him created his wife.

The Koran

They rolled old Adam
into the operating-room
hacking-at his limbs,
probing his privvies in
his pristine sistine
jock-shorts
cutting and digging into
a bloodskinned babá
shrinerlike
tasting the

salty amputation.

SAPPHIC PHANTASY

—glassed-out smoking snow.
Her cool breathing
drifts
the pillowskull,
sheet-paint bubbles breasts,
rising
falling,
legs loom in woven heat.

A lamplight avalanche reveals
shadowed-sockets scraping dark's skin
where the handled
nakedness of
both
dances itself
to
death.

JUGGERNAUT

For Roland Kirk and Joe Texador

He hung a leopardess on the piano
jigging the chrome
his tongue leapt out
to clutch the reeds
digging, jigging the leopardess with
his gunmetal horns

bucking the rhythm
of a zoot-armored blindman
unicolor in-an' -out,

beating the buckra-body with
his kink-haired hand,

sound-broiled inch-thick lips
polishing his toothy harmonica
strobe-damp

— gaffing his now-deaf leopardess,
grating his gong
to an atonal
orgasm.

Sallyann Giacosanizio, '70

Segregation in Jefferson

Marcia Janulewicz, '70

Twentieth century America is pre-occupied with communication. Contemporary philosophy seems to hold that while individuality and uniqueness are virtuous, isolation is not. And anyone who finds comfort in his aloneness in a world filled with other social beings is therefore in some way not fulfilling his human potential. Isolation, be it geographic or personal, has the reputation of fostering an inbreeding of ideas and a warped concept of reality. It provides the ideal setting for the debasement of the human condition and the creation of social chaos, and is for those that it ensnares a most unhealthy and threatening situation. Yet even today, in technocratic, affluent America, such an unhealthy atmosphere exists in what is knowingly referred to as "the South." Apart from the rest of society from its pre-Civil War heyday, the South has retained some of its clanishness and isolation even up to the present. Why this region, once the scene of a gallant and gentle civilization, has become an arena of hatred and violence is the question asked by William Faulkner in his novel *Light in August*. And it is in the concept of isolation leading to a warped sense of social and moral values that he attempts to find an answer. For only in isolation from other men could man's ethical conceptions become so twisted and so fragmented as to produce a bigoted community like Jefferson, Mississippi.

Faulkner provides us with this microcosmic view of Southern civilization by focusing on one character, Joe Christmas, who becomes for us the stage upon which the citizens of Jefferson act out their pseudo-Christian masquerade. Joe, in his tragic and predestined anonymity, is the point at which all the misconceptions of this inbred Calvinist community merge, intensify, and finally explode. Because he is a pawn and not a self-willed man, Joe's character is developed through the various people with whom he shares a part of his existence. He is not presented outright for he lacks both strength and honesty; he is instead hinted at and reflected in

the lives of such characters as Doc Hines, Mr. McEachern, and Miss Burden. Each of these people in the self-righteous violence and candid bigotry he embodies adds to the totality of Joe Christmas who then becomes the epitome of the masochistic society Jefferson really is.

Joe Christmas's fate is already determined for him even before his birth when his grandfather decides that Joe's father is part Negro. He is born into a myth created for him by others, a myth he is in no way capable of resolving or accepting. Kidnapped by his grandfather while still an infant, Joe is brought to an orphanage where Doc Hines takes on a job as janitor, not to watch over his grandchild in love, but to keep himself near what he looks upon as God's symbol of sin and evil. For Doc Hines considers himself a good Calvinist, an instrument of the will of God to which he is constantly and sensitively attuned. Speaking of his illegitimate grandson, he says

I know evil. Ain't I made evil to get up and walk God's world? A walking pollution in God's own face I made it . . . I just waited, on His own good time, when he would see fitten to reveal it to His living world. And its come now. This is the sign, wrote again in womansinning and bitchery.

Quick to condemn Joe because he is the son of his mother's sin, Doc Hines is ironically oblivious to his own faults of hatred and rigidity. So irrationally outraged at his daughter's sin that he calmly causes her death in childbirth, Doc Hines feels no need to explain his behavior. He is acting as a Christian who loves his God, and as the instrument of His vengeance on earth, he is merely doing the work of Christ. It is this hate-filled, dogmatic old man, viewing himself in the role of an Old Testament prophet, who burdens Joe with the stigma of being part Negro. It is he who creates in Joe the turbulent need for identity, the insecurity of not knowing whether he is black or white or both that leads him to his masochistic pattern of life — and all because Doc Hines considers himself the instrument of God's all-wise, all-merciful justice on earth.

This warped concept of Christianity finds another willing host in the person of Mr. McEachern who rescues Joe from life at the orphanage and offers him the promises of family life. McEachern feels he is practicing charity of the highest degree by taking over the upbringing of so unworthy a character as young Joe. "He will eat my bread and he will observe my religion," McEachern declares when he takes Joe away from the orphanage. What he does not say is that he will also become the objective of McEachern's deep-seated hate and loneliness. McEachern, like Doc Hines, considers himself a good Christian and lives out his cold, barren life with the conviction that such an unhuman existence is in some way pleasing to God. He accepts responsibility for Joe not out of compassion or love, but merely because Joe will present him with the opportunity to act out a travesty of Christian charity. McEachern tries to impress upon young Joe the virtues of hard work and fear of God without ever alluding to the virtues of love or understanding. He demands obedience because it is morally right but avoids tolerance as a sign of weakness and feels that he is fulfilling his moral responsibility as a Christian parent by physically forcing Joe to memorize the words of the catechism without ever dwelling upon their meaning. McEachern reaches the apex of his sadistic-Christian existence when he kneels down to pray with Joe after having savagely beaten him:

He asked that the child's stubborn heart be softened and that the sin of disobedience be forgiven him also, through the advocacy of the man whom he had flouted and disobeyed, requesting that Almighty be as magnanimous as himself, and by and through and because of conscious grace.

Because of his isolation from a truly human life governed by valid Christian ethics, McEachern is incapable of looking out of the self-justifying, self-righteous theology he has convinced himself of. He is incapable of accepting failure in himself, for he, as the instrument of God, is his only absolute, his only hold on a rational existence. McEachern is tragically secure in his interpretation of Calvinist doctrine. Strong in faith and dogmatic in his convictions, he never once experiences the instability so evident in Joe, even though to a great extent it is he who causes this instability.

What the lives of both Doc Hines and McEachern illustrate is an incapacity for true moral judgment because of an unfortunate refusal to break through the wall of isolation

imposed not only by the rural location of Jefferson, but more devastatingly by their own belief in self-sufficiency. In this bizarre atmosphere their commitments of love toward God take on a definite un-Christian flavor, and their very acts of being are transformed into living expressions of bigotry.

All these fragmented values and misconceptions come together in Joe when he meets Miss Burden, a Northern Abolitionist who tries to love him not because he is a man, but because he might be a Negro. Yet Miss Burden feels separated from the very group of people she finds herself so attracted to. Like Joe Christmas, she is the product of her parents' prejudices and has been molded by them, almost unconsciously, into the vessel of unquestioning bigotry that Joe meets. Her father explained the Negro race to her as an eternal curse on mankind from which no one, least of all she, could escape:

. . . after that I seemed to see them for the first time not as people, but as a thing, a shadow in which I lived, we lived, all white people, all other people. I thought of all the children coming forever and ever into the world, with the black shadow already falling, upon them before they drew breath. And I seemed to see the black shadow in the shape of a cross . . . I saw all the little babies that would ever be in the world, the ones not yet born — a long line of them with their arms spread, on the black crosses.

Miss Burden easily transposes her Calvinist doctrine of predestination to the idea of a Negro curse, oblivious to the disparity this creates within her Abolitionist sympathies. Within these sympathies Joe takes on the image of a predetermined scapegoat, a misused Christ, made in the image of society by people like Doc Hines and McEachern who then heap their sins upon him, and in crucifying him, obtain the illusion of purification. Conditioned by his youthful training to hate Southern Calvinism, Joe nevertheless finds himself falling back on predestination as the only explanation for his inner turmoil and feelings of isolation. Joe absorbs the hate hurled at him by Doc Hines and McEachern and squirms under his debasing relationship with Miss Burden because he sees himself in this role of scapegoat and lacks both the desire and the energy to reverse it.

As an explanation for the bigotry and chaos associated with the South, Faulkner suggests the moral aberrations of Christians who chose to lay their burdens on their God and avoid the demand of all ethical responsibility. He presents us with a society whose membership

is strictly determined by the unchanged and unchallenged categories of tradition. The people of Jefferson are forever and in all ways of Jefferson. They accept the myths of their ancestors without question, they look upon their religion as complete and never changing. Their isolation is not so much a problem of geography as it is of morality. Believing themselves to be ideal Christians, they ironically reveal themselves to be monsters, almost sub-human in their cold potential for hatred, and frighteningly anti-human in their ability to

breed a misfit as warped and isolated as Joe Christmas. In probing the problems of the South, Faulkner has arrived at the horror of a people who perpetrate bigotry in the name of Christian justice and social necessity, not because they have failed to look within themselves for moral values, but because they have never looked anywhere else. Because in their isolation they have chosen to deprive themselves of all other norms of rational and social behavior, they have become in the process only less human.

The Delicate of Today

I wait for tomorrow in the delicate of today,
Am dumb to groan its song,
Brittle-spoked to cry my need.
Only daffodils splinter spirits
With the yellowness of your hair,
Green knit stems upon your sweater.
Oh, I am struck with the delicate of today.

Freckles fringe your face
Caught with tomorrow's cup
Dipped in secrets spilled only by the fools.
It's the jazz beauty of the new time which presses day.
Perhaps desire haunts the cactus of possibility.
But everywhere is nothing . . . nowhere.
Oh, be struck with the delicate of today!

Trains stream into unawares
Bags packed for nowhere,
Stuffed with the riff-raff of consciousness.
The rhythm and rhyme are tickets to oblivion
Caught in the knuckling of knowledge.
I'll pocket poems for love
But now I am struck with the delicate of today . . .

Jane O'Connell, '69



Susan Fallon, '70



Lorraine Shirkus, '70

For the Anniversary of the Death of Teilhard de Chardin,

Easter, 1955

The expedition began on an April evening.
The outline of your face was terrible with peace.
Like the stone men you uncovered
you are grown whole at last with granite gentleness —
I search your crags for mystery.

Thoughts deeper than your words
beat beat beat
into the darkness,
stark-strike the staccato of your Eli Eli
that harnessed the unresisting flame
into conflagration
on this primeval night of elemental fire.

Water
air
earth and fire
converge,
diminish the gray crust
chisel the gray dust
until your earth out-breaks in glory.

Rise phoenix
from Easter ashes
into a universe
Christified.

Sister Joan Sullivan S.N.D., '69

MYTH

Mary Margaret Teague, '69

I

The water eddied under the bridge. Black like a crawling watersnake. The tender grasses on the shore, so lush in day's lightpouring, hung swamplike, sluggish as worms on the black shoreline — so many slugs feeding on the damp swamp-earth.

Above the black lines of the bridge, the sky swept black-clouded, heated with a heavy urgency. The storm would slash soon. But now the blackness held a heaviness, a dross weight of hot fetid air that sucked out one's life and left a limpness of despair in the veins. The air made one wait, incapable of movement like a slow, lifeless slug, hung on the edge of the heaviness, weighted.

Sharuff watched the water flow, thickly, slowly. In the west the flashes of heat-lightning scratched the sky, electric and hot. They crackled and shriveled across the night, crackled and shriveled like hot flashes inside oneself, and split the naked sky. Sharuff squatted at the edge of the river under the bridge. In one hand he held a stick, a long wooden branch, crisp and brittle with deadness. He settled his heavy frame onto the earth, and felt the dampness through the seat of his thick denim pants. It spread a stain of wetness over his buttocks and relieved the heat from his body. Sharuff stuck the branch into the water. The black flowing growths of

the river caught and mingled about the stick. He held it for some time, just piercing the surface of the water, catching pieces of black stuff about the wood. And the black heap grew larger and larger. Sharuff smiled a small smile, because it was foolish to sit so, with the branch in the water and seeing the crud build onto the stick.

He remembered in his youth how he and companions spent nights here by the river. How they would watch to see the river-god rise out of the morning. As he grew older, he knew it was only the fog, rising into the daytime. He smiled softly now to remember his youth and the happy ways they had of learning the land and its habits. The river flowed slowly past — tired, Sharuff thought, like an old man's veins, weary of their burden, but pulsing, always pulsing the lifeblood through. Sharuff knew the habits of the river as he knew himself. He knew every curve of it, its colors, and all its mysteries. He knew it in a way that a man might say, I know my woman, or I know the skin of my own thigh. He knew it with a deep inner knowledge, and the light of knowledge burned in Sharuff's eye when he spoke of the river. People saw Sharuff's knowledge, and they admired it. Most were afraid of the river with a fear of the not known. But Sharuff did not fear the river. He respected its power but he did not fear it.

The black crud collected onto the stick. Sharuff felt the branch brittle under his palm. His palm was dry and hard with callouses, and the brittle branch was separate from him with its own dryness, brittle and dead. If he let it go the branch would sink into the muck and flow with it, and for a time the tip would be visible, billowing on the surface of the water, and then it would be sucked in, caught in the funnelling crud and be swept into the river's movement. Sharuff thought how he would never see the stick again or feel its dryness against his palm. But he would hold it in him, how he squatted and let the crud catch on the dead bark. There would be a time when he would think of it and it would feed his satisfaction to remember.

"Sharuff," she said. She came from behind him.

He watched as she felt her way down the slope, her black form cutting into the land, seeming to grow out of the land. She descended foot-after-foot. It was a long process for her. She did not like to slide easily down as the men would do. It was her way to pick each step slowly, as something deliberate,

this foot just so, and now this. Sharuff squatted where he was, watching. It was not his way to help her. For she was a new-comer to this place, and he wanted just to watch, to fit her into the landscape, to wait for her to melt into it, to become a part of his night.

"Sharuff," she said. She stood just behind him now, and she put her right hand to his shoulder. He thought she clasped a bunch of grass, in her left. Her hand stood out white against the black of his shirt. It touched him very soft and still. Her hand was warm through the cloth, and he felt it in the heat which rose through his legs. She withdrew her hand and stood waiting. He spread his oilskin slicker for her and she lowered herself next to him.

She did not call him again, but snuggled next to him with her head rested on his shoulder. In her left hand she still clutched the bunch of grasses. Her black hair sifted over his chest, and lightly touched his clenched hand which held the branch. Sharuff felt the heat rage in his spine, sharp licks of flame along the bone like the cracking of heat-lightning on the heavy night. She sighed, and he knew the quiet as it spread through him. She quieted him with her own silence. He moved softly just enough to see her face. She was watching him with soft eyes as if she did not quite see him. She drew him out of himself into her quiet. Then she lowered her eyes. She watched his hand holding the stick, and softly she stroked the dry bark with her finger. She stroked it softly without heaviness as if unconscious that she stroked it at all.

"You are quiet," he said.

She glanced up. Swept his face and folded herself into him in a glance. Then she turned and watched the river.

"I'm happy."

Again the quiet, and Sharuff felt he would sink into the soft swamp-earth where the coolness waited. He burned as she nestled next to him, and he knew that she was unconscious of his heat. She nestled next to him and entered into him, and burned in him, but she nestled unconscious of her power.

"Why does the heat flash so?" She asked it not from fear, but with the curiosity of a child who just wants to know.

He mused, watching the strange flashes of light. Her head lifted from his shoulder and he saw her profile chiseled sharp against the darkness. She was very beautiful, her forehead was high and very white and her blouse opened at the collar and showed the soft white hollow of her throat. He shoved the

stick hard and let it go into the swirl of water.

"It flashes because its heart is hurting," he answered her.

She laughed, "Oh, Sharuff!" And she flicked her arm, sweeping the long hair from her shoulders as if to relieve its heaviness.

He felt the sting when it brushed his cheek, and he choked as the fire leapt in his loins.

"I found these on the way," she said, displaying the fistful of grasses. "Aren't they lovely?"

"Yes," he said, "lovely."

"I'm going to bury them," she said, "all together. And we'll see them in the daytime all the colors together."

"The sun will bleach them," he said. He was amused by her.

"Oh, not so quickly," she said, "but, even so, they are lovely and should be together." She poked a small hole in the damp swamp-earth, widening it with her fingers, and stood the grasses in it. She patted the earth solid around them and the grasses stood in an uneven black clump. The mud stuck to her palms and under her fingernails, and she held her palms toward her dismayed.

"Here," he said. His handkerchief was a large white blob in the night. As he handed it to her a sudden flash lit the scene to daylight, and he thought how ludicrous it seemed, squatting here, lending her his handkerchief, with the river flowing slowly beneath them under the swamp-earth, and the storm waiting on the horizon.

"Oh," she laughed, "I've ruined it! Look!" She was laughing, holding it out for him to see. Her fingers were clean, but a smudge of dirt crossed one cheek.

"Here," he said, "Give it to me." He rubbed the spot gently, and she watched him, her eyes never leaving his face.

The spot was gone. He folded the cloth into his pocket.

She turned away from him.

In the stillness Sharuff heard a quiet splashing into the river. Muskrats.

He turned to look up the river where the lightning shot the sky open. "No," he said to her, "Its heart is not hurting. It is joyful." He smiled at her, and then he laughed, taking her hand and pressing it in his big fist. "It's joyful, Kara, and the heavens are dancing for you."

"Dancing," she echoed. Laughing a sharp cry into the heaviness, she spun from his grasp pirouetting across the moist earth, spinning, toe-dancing away from him. She swooped to the earth and billowed up from

the swamp, her wide skirt billowing about her as she danced, clouding all but the sharp lines of her face and her almost maniacal smile. She was alone in the heat-storm and she swooped and rose like some ancient bird-goddess caught in a joy-crazed dance of celebration. And he found infinite beauty in her, in the movement of her, her body in the fluidity of the dance. Her very oblivion, her negation of him, filled him with knowledge of her beauty. She was for the moment of the heat-storm, alive to the electric moment, and it held infinite mystery for him, and he knew that he would remember this always, her maniacal dance in the heat-storm, and the exquisite beauty of her body in motion.

As he watched she came near to him, and touched his face with her breath caught in the gurgle of laughter, and she withdrew from him, always floating in the dance. Then the heat rose through him, piercing through him in great gusts of fire, and taking his breath, and he damned himself and riveted his eyes to her, to her undulating body, moving slowly swooping and rising bird-like. Then she stopped, quick, suspended in a moment of stillness against the sky, her body cutting the night, her arms stretched above her, scraping the sky raw, clutching at it. The lightning flashed behind her. She fell to the damp earth, finished.

She looked across at him, laughing softly. And her look at him was the look of a child who has trespassed on unknown property and escaped unscathed. When he did not smile her look turned to wonder and she looked away from him. And he knew she was conscious of him, and of the change. He felt great tenderness for her, and it hurt him more than the licking of the fires.

"Kara," he said.

But she would not see him. She watched the river, and the lightning as it filtered into the distance. The storm would not be tonight.

He pointed to her buried grasses. "See," he said, "They're wondering why you are so silent." He touched the grasses softly, caressing them with his fingers.

She turned and he smiled at her. She saw his misery and she too touched the grasses. She fingered them gently as if they had a feeling of their own.

"Mustn't I be silent?" she asked. She moved closer to him on the oilskin cloth. "Why mustn't there be silence, Sharuff?" Her black eyes questioned him and he felt that she knew underneath her, in her soul, how

she burned in him. Almost, he thought, she wanted to torture him. But he answered her as always.

"The silence hides many things. Many things that should not be hidden." He threw a pebble into the billowing water and wondered what the crusty bottom must look like.

"Why?" she asked. She was quite close to him, and he felt it was her breath that touched his cheek. "Why mustn't things be hidden, Sharuff?" He felt that she tortured him beyond endurance, and he burned under her questions. He didn't want to question. He wanted to have her cold and hard on the riverbank. Then she would need no answers.

She nestled next to him, her head on his shoulder.

"Aren't some things better hidden, Sharuff," she whispered. Her face was lifted to him and he saw now only trust in her look, trust and a kind of sympathy. "They told me once that often things are better left unsaid."

"They're wrong," he said. He sat stiffly and his coldness frightened her. She slipped her arm under his and lay her hand gently on his own.

"Why?" She felt her hand as it lay on his and knew a separateness between them. She pressed her question on him, "Why? Why isn't silence best? Words hurt."

"Words are truth."

The heaviness pressed down into her body and she fell quiet.

The swamp-smell penetrated her veins, and she wondered why she had ridiculed herself. Why she had danced before him on the glutted river's edge? She felt the joy die in her, and she was ashamed. She had come here wanting him, and had shamed herself before him. Her shame kept her silent.

Then out of the swamp-filled quiet he spoke, "Kara?"

She lifted her face to him.

He was shaking. She felt the quick tremors in the black hulk of his body against her, and it shocked her, and she faced him, and her head fell back. Her tongue clicked against her teeth and his body shook violently. And then it ended, quickly as it had begun, and they were quiet, leaning on each other, and not quite sure what it had been or if it had been. He held her silently, pressed to him, in the clumsy hug of a man beside himself with tenderness.

He wanted to keep it, to cover her with their silence, but the words needed speaking.

"I kissed you," he whispered. He stroked her hair clumsily and tried to end the shaking. The tremors wrenched through his body. "I kissed you, Kara."

"Yes," she said. She lay against him and supported him. She felt a quietness inside and she wanted only to soothe him.

And he continued to tremble, "Don't be angry —" he whispered.

"Ssh-ssh" she rocked him. Back and forth she rocked him like an infant. She closed her eyes and felt an infinite peace and a sharing with him. Silently she rocked him while he held her.

When she opened her eyes she wondered that the river was the same, that the black hotness still hung on the air. It was like a revelation to her that the world could be the same. How strange, she thought, that I am entirely new, and she knew tremendous tenderness for the man, that he had made her new. But he knew nothing only the gentle rocking motion of their bodies.

Finally he opened his eyes and his arms tightened on her. He kissed her cheek very softly, and pulled away from her, and rose. She remained watching him, and he turned and smiled at her, and then he bent over the mound she had made of the grasses, re-opened the small hole and removed them. With a stone he tore at the earth and scooped a new hole, deeper and longer. He laid the grasses in it and covered it over so that they were buried entirely. He turned to her, "Why did you come here?"

She looked at him, "Because I wanted you."

His face flooded with red. He looked away at the river, and she thought he would never turn to her again. But he turned to her, and walked to where she sat. He stood over her and the red flush was gone. His voice was gentle, "So we have come out, haven't we? The two of us out of our little holes" he smiled, "our hiding places —"

"But —" she stopped. He saw in her the small fear of it, and knew that she understood. She meditated with her eyes glued to his face. She traced every secret out of him. When she was done he felt limp. "But now, Sharuff?" She was trusting him with herself, and the soft power of her trust burned in him.

"But now," he mimicked her. He looked down at her, saw her smallness, and the small fires in his legs made him weak. Then he was on the slicker, holding her, and brushing away the damp black hair from her temple.

The quietness surrounded them and the flashes of lightning broke crazed patterns on the river's blackness. Sharuff watched silently.

"Kara?"

"Hmmm —" she cuddled to him and he hated to break her peace.

"Kara, I will not go back." He waited.

Snuggled against him, she glanced up, "Nor I."

"We will go across the bridge."

"Yes," she said.

He pressed her against him. It will be good, he thought, and he said a small prayer for her that it would be good. He looked up at the sky. "I am only a man," he said, "let it be good." He watched the small thing in his arms. Her eyelids were soft and fine with little pale veins across them. He brushed the lashes softly with the tips of his fingers. She opened her eyes.

The lightning quickened, and he felt the storm's nearness.

"We'll be leaving, Kara" he said.

She smiled, "All right."

He rose and stretched his big frame, watching the sky. She made no move but sat perfectly still on the oilskin slicker.

"Now," he said, "please."

She extended her hand and he helped her. Then he picked up the slicker and folded it under his arm. Swiftly he began to move across the slope, still guiding her. But she went more slowly and he slowed his movement to hers. Sometimes he half-lifted her over the clumps of grass and rock. She was very unsure of herself on the slippery grasses. Often she clutched his hand as if she were a child, and he wished there were no storm coming, and they did not have to leave.

"Oh — " she gasped. She slipped and caught herself, grasping a bunch of long grasses.

Sharuff smiled, lifting her onto the road, "Here," he said, "I'll help you." Then they were on the road, moving swiftly toward the bridge.

II

"Ho, now — Up, boy, move it along there!" Jeriel eyed the clouds with contempt. "God-dammit! Every year same old story. Hey! C'mon, move it up there!" He slapped the white horse on the flank, "'Atta, boy!"

The horse moved onto the truck, and Jeriel closed the gate quickly. "Damn show horses spook so easy, you sure do." His quiet voice seemed to soothe the animal, and Jeriel was satisfied, "It's for your own good, baby, it sure

is." Someone tugged at his pant leg. He jumped down from the wagon.

Old Dumbey cackled, "You watch out there, boy, or someday your neck's gonna' break in two. Right in two, mind now." Old Dumbey always wore purple. Today it was polka dots, purple on an orange background. There was something pathetic about the way Old Dumbey dressed himself. Jeriel sometimes thought it was to hide himself behind the weirdness.

Old Dumbey was three and a half feet tall, and the best performer among the midgets. Jeriel admired him, and he didn't mind the strange costumes, or the foul smell of them.

"When it breaks, Dumbey, you pick up the pieces, okay?"

"Ha! You kin be one of us, Jeriel. I'll see to it!"

Jeriel laughed, "You tell the boss that, man! He already thinks we're all crazy. But thanks, I'll keep it in mind." He took a bar of chocolate from his jeans, "Have a bite."

Old Dumbey chewed seriously, "Those are mean friends comin'."

They scanned the horizon where short, sharp cracks of lightning skirted the dark clouds. Most of the animals had been bedded down, but the last of the ponies had still to be put up. It happened every season at least once. They were accustomed to the storm, they respected it.

"When will we break, boy?" Old Dumbey asked. People were used to asking Jeriel for the answers. He always seemed to know what was to come. Some people said the circus wouldn't run without him, but that was only conjecture.

"Why, Dumbey? Goin' somewhere?" Jeriel was laughing, "Be careful, huh? Last time you were on a binge, who had t'go pick you up, huh?" He slapped Old Dumbey on the back. They were good friends.

Dumbey laughed, "Yeah, well you pick up the pieces, okay?"

"Sure, old man, you bet." Jeriel stretched and yawned, "More to get. See you around. You goin' tonight?"

"Yeah, we'll be there. Love t'dance, me and El," Dumbey scratched his head, "don't know though but what this storm'll make them cancel it, huh?"

Jeriel sniffed the muggy air, "Too damn hot for it anyway, maybe."

"Yeah."

They parted and Jeriel strode down to supervise the packing of the small tents. The first year they had ignored the storm-warnings and left the small tents standing. When the thing was over Iskin had said how it was lucky there was a one left up. Now it was policy to dismember them at the first sign of the storm. No one thought it a waste of time, least of all Jeriel. He had known the first storm.

"Eben, these men need a pulley."

"Sure thing, Mr. Raymond. Right away," Eben waved, "will do!"

Jeriel grinned. Eben was a good man, helpful and easy to handle. Iskin had been smart to get him. For all the stink of Iskin himself, Jeriel thought, he sure knows a good man when he sees one.

"Time out, Jeriel?" Iskin watched him from the door of the office.

"Just checking around. It's comin' in slower this year, you think?"

"I guess," Iskin looked abstracted. He stepped back, holding the door, "Come in for a minute, Jeriel?" He appeared nervous.

Jeriel eyed him, "There's work to do."

Iskin wiped the sweat from his forehead, "I guess. God, it's hot." He grasped Jeriel's arm, "Come in. It's nothing t'do with her."

Watching him closely, Jeriel followed Iskin into the cramped room. The clutter of papers and mementos sickened him. The dulling greyness of the storm seemed to have taken root in the place, casting moldy blue shadows over each worn and ugly piece of furniture. Even Iskin's face looked moldy and old. Jeriel supposed he must look much the same.

"Well, Jeriel, I saw you talking with Old Dumbey." Iskin attempted to sound jovial.

Jeriel nodded, "Yes, Sir."

Iskin flushed, "Well — uh — How is the old fellow? Doing all right now, isn't he?" He fingered an ugly green statuette on the desk. It was of a nude woman, and the artist's ugly rendition of her body sickened Jeriel. He tried not to see it, or Iskin's stubby finger as it traced the form.

"He's all right, Mr. Iskin."

"Well now, that's fine. Fine," Iskin trembled, "Well, Jeriel, to the basics. You know what I called you in for?" He looked the younger man up and down, and Jeriel felt that the fishy eyes were pulling him in, sucking him under.

"You said we wouldn't talk about her." Jeriel could feel the anger growing, it grew in swift and full charges from his loins to his brain. He gritted his teeth to control it.

"Now, boy, it's not her I want to talk of. It's you," Iskin placated. He inched around the desk and his arm was about Jeriel's shoulders, "It's you that matters to me. You know that, boy. I just want t'help you out. That's all. A little good advice to the troops," he tittered.

Silently Jeriel shrugged the arm away and folded his arms, "I don't need your advice. Thanks. Is that all, Sir?"

Iskin's grey face burned red and his fist smashed on the desk, "No — Damnit! — That's *not* all! Who d'you think you are boy, huh? You tell me who you think you are with

your fine woman, and her goddamned airs and her — her —"

"Contempt, Sir?" Jeriel was almost laughing.

Iskin flamed, "You'll see, boy — you wait — I tell you! Her and her goddamned laughing. She made an idiot out of me!"

Beyond the windows a flash of lightning cracked the dark.

Iskin was calmer, "Well, Jeriel, I don't know. It's your life. But mind you, you watch that girl. You mind that. And that Dumbey. Boy, keep away from him. He's an old drunk. You'll go down if you move with him, and we don't want that, — no, we don't! You know, I've got big plans for you, boy!"

"Mr. Dumbey's a good man."

"Dumbey's a drunken old sermoner, and if he hadn't of been a clown, he'd have been a sad priest! The circus is full of misplaced priests, Jeriel. It's the dropoff zone," Iskin was laughing now too. "You just watch out, okay?"

"Can I go now?"

"Sure, boy. Sure."

Jeriel stormed out. He hated Iskin. But the worst part was that there was truth in what he said. Dumbey was a sermoner. Only he was wrong about the girl. God, Jeriel thought, let him be wrong.

Grumbles of thunder trembled on the horizon, and Jeriel sped across the grounds toward the coach he shared with Johnson and Kreuger. In contrast to Iskin's, their office was clinically neat. It was incongruous in the damp desert setting, this office with its neat shelves, and ordered rows of calendars. Johnson glanced up as Jeriel hopped through the door.

"In for a good one, huh?" he grinned. Johnson had known the first storm also.

Jeriel saluted him, "I always did admire you hard workers."

Laughing, Johnson poured him a mug of coffee, "You try running this show without paper and pen, see how long it'll last." Johnson was a warm man, and Jeriel liked him. He didn't butt into other people's business, yet he always showed when you needed a friend.

"If this one blows over we'll be out before three tomorrow. If it don't, then God knows what'll happen to this schedule."

Jeriel snorted, "When are you gonna' learn to live without your dog-eared calendars, huh? You and those calendars. You should get married!" He dodged as Johnson threw one at him.

"Hey! By the way, Jer, how's the girl?" Johnson winked at him, "She did a damn good

job on Iskin the other night. Man, I thought he'd die when she got goin' on him!" he laughed "You got yourself a winner. You really did." Johnson smiled remembering.

Jeriel wondered, what would it be like to kill them all? He thought of the whole scene again, as he had thought of it often since. She with her black hair piled high, and one of those really short skirts, and the silk blouse. And Iskin with his ugly bow tie and his way of sneering at them all, his way of looking down on them all, as if he were God come again. Only Iskin couldn't sneer at her. She was his better and they all knew it. She knew it too, and she mocked him. It wouldn't have been bad if that new man hadn't shown. But he had come to the dance with his clean shirt and fresh pants. He'd asked her to dance and took her right away from Iskin. Even Jeriel couldn't do that though she was his wife. Jeriel smiled now to think of it. That guy had done what he, Jeriel, could never do. He'd made her forget she was better. Only Iskin didn't like it. And he tried to cut. It had been funny, Iskin cutting in, and that bold guy saying to her, "Do you want to dance with him?", and her laughing answer, "Who's he?", spoken so they all could hear. Jeriel laughed out loud. Well it had been fun to see Iskin shot down. Only sometimes he still wanted to shoot them all for causing trouble.

"She couldn't help it," he muttered.

"Hey?" Johnson queried.

"Nothing."

"Oh. I thought maybe you were inviting a guy over to dinner."

Jeriel smiled, "Meaning you?"

"Who else?"

"Sure. C'mon."

Jeriel's tent stood apart from the others, staked down tightly near the hill. On the other side of it ran the river, bedded in swamplands, over which they had crossed two weeks ago. His wife, Jeriel thought, had an eye for what was pretty. Even with the storm swelling the skyline, the outline of the hill looked strange and rather nice. It hit at something in him but he did not know what. Only he meant to remember and have her take a look at that view. It had been her idea to stake down there.

At first, he did not notice the quiet within the shelter. Johnson sat down, and Jeriel went out back expecting to find her. Light rain was beginning to fall. It flicked off him as he stood alone on the far side of the tent, and a small shaking deep inside of him would not quit. Jeriel went back into the tent.

"Hey," Johnson hailed him, "she lost?" He was laughing, but Jeriel didn't answer, and in the quiet they heard the singe of the rain as it pelted the canvas.

"Hey you, Jeriel," Johnson poked him in the rib, "Boy, do you look beat. Look, you want me t'come some other time, I'll be glad. I don't want t'start nothin' between you and your wife."

"She's not here."

"Huh?"

"She's not here, Bob. She's not around anywhere," Jeriel felt an ache rise inside him, "She's not out back or anywhere."

"Well now, that's no harm. We'll just fix something ourselves, hey, Jer?" Johnson was puzzled by the hurt in Jeriel's face.

"She's gone."

"What?"

"She's gone."

"Hey," Johnson said, "you sit down and I'll be back. We'll look for her. Don't want her out when it starts. You sit and I'll get some of the guys," Johnson ran from the tent.

Jeriel ignored him. Somewhere in him a big hurt was forming. He couldn't feel it yet, but he knew it would come. He thought back to that night. Somehow then he'd known, only neither of them said it. But he'd known when they got home. He remembered her crying, and how he'd called her a liar, and then how her eyes grew big and she began to laugh. Just to laugh and laugh, and Jeriel had stood and watched.

She had turned on him, "Why? Tell me why! When did I lie to you." She laughed again, "I'd always thought if there was anything left us, it was the trust, and now you've cut that too." Then she had cried, and he had stood, like some dumb animal and watched her misery.

Now she was gone. He knew it, and he understood that nothing would bring her back, not Iskin, not his own need. He sat still on the hard-backed chair letting it fill him. He did not hear Johnson and Iskin enter. It was Iskin who grasped his arm and shook him.

"Boy, hey! Hear me," Iskin's voice rasped on Jeriel's nerves, scratched him raw, so the hurt became real.

"All right, boy, now you listen here t'me. We looked everywhere, and your wife's not t'be found. So what've ya' got to say? Do you know where she is?"

"No," Jeriel hated him. He hated them all and all their ugly, curious faces.

"That's quite a storm whipping up out there, boy. You know where that girl is, you'd better say."

"She's gone."

Iskin wheezed a laugh, "Look, boy, you know and I know that she's somewhere. People don't just run off. She's a married woman!"

"She's not just people," Jeriel rose and kicked the chair viciously, sending it crashing across the tent, "And it's all your stinking fault!" Then suddenly Iskin trembled, and turned toward the exit. Old Dumbey stood in the opening, his arms folded. He was supported from outside by a sodden group of workers, who watched the whole scene unmoving.

Iskin turned to Jeriel, "Now, boy, how can you say that, huh? I mean, I hardly knew the girl — "

"Right," Jeriel interrupted, "you hardly knew her, and you tore her apart!"

Johnson lay a restraining hand on Jeriel's shoulder. He thrust it off.

"You mocked them, and they were better than you, and you hated them. You hated them because they wouldn't give! *They wouldn't give!* You hear that, Iskin, they didn't care about you — " Jeriel stopped. He could feel the wetness of his face and he thought the storm was on him, and the pounding rain deafened them all, and Iskin trembled. But he tried once more.

"They didn't care about you either, Jeriel, they didn't — "

Jeriel's arm shot out, straight and hard, perfectly sure and Iskin collapsed at Old Dumbey's feet. In the quiet the storm grew loud, and Jeriel shivered.

Old Dumbey signaled his men to wait. He ignored Iskin, eyeing Jeriel openly, and Jeriel felt that Old Dumbey understood.

"You want we should go out an' look for them, Jer?"

"No," Jeriel's head ached.

Old Dumbey tried once more, "But, boy, it's Kara out there in that storm — "

"No, old man," Jeriel silenced him.

He looked out into the rain, and he thought he could see them walking together, the big man and the girl. Suddenly Jeriel felt a fire rippling inside him, rippling and scorching him, and his jaw quivered. They were right, the man and the girl, and it scared him. And looking around he knew the waiting men would never understand it.

"No," he said, "let them go."

THE ONLY BEGOTTEN

He paced the week restlessly
waiting for the Sunday dawn,
 waiting
for the pack of sheep to bleat their crooked hymns.
They came.
And with him singing
I saw mock-herds of faith
 prancing blindly in the streets
 to their rusty Wonderlands.
Shorn of their colors
 he followed
spilling his thimble of shadows
upon the yawning church doors.
Alone,
 with his winter's prayer
I watched his frozen smirk melt pious masks
 to lies
 and Wednesday's promises.
Suddenly he glowed,
and I wondered if his sandled feet
 shining black and holey
were ever cold on Mondays.

Joan Hoffman, '70



Florence Garratt, '69

THE LONGEST WAY HOME

CAROL ANN MURPHY, '69

Annie shifted nervously in her seat and looked at the clock. Oh, why couldn't the bell ring now. It would be an endless few more minutes of "Solve the following; Select the correct answer; Use the formula to check your answers." What answers? She didn't know any answers and why did the book have to be so insistent if she didn't know.

She wanted to look at the clock again. It was probably the same time. If she looked up she would see at least one of her thirty classmates staring at her. She always caught them before they looked away. They had stared at the funeral too. Even Patsy had stared. They never stopped staring. Annie had worn a white dress that day and it had made her blue eyes much bluer and her short brown hair shine. Mother had told her about the colors of clothes. But all those eyes hadn't been staring just at Annie. When she was walking down the aisle she caught Timmy first. His eyes were on the corner of the casket and he was pale before she caught him.

When she did, his eyes were sorry and his face was so red you couldn't see his freckles. And Lou Ann, the one with the curls and funny nose that Annie didn't like, she stared too. She was off in a cloud somewhere between Annie and the altar, so it was hard to make her sorry. All those eyes . . . Her mother had told her that it wasn't polite to stare. She wondered if anyone had told Timmy and Lou Ann. She should feel sorry for them perhaps. No one would ever have to tell her again. She would remember because she had to.

It was only a few more minutes, but Annie had forgotten about the clock. She leaned her elbow on the desk that was too small. She would have to get some of those plastic things that kept shirt elbows clean. There was only Dad now, and he couldn't be washing and ironing her shirts. She wouldn't let him, unless he insisted sometimes when she was in a hurry.

The remaining minutes were seemingly endless now. Annie didn't want to look at the clock any more. She wanted the bell to ring, so she could stretch her legs. She could do that very well now, because they let the girls wear slacks on cold and snowy days. She tried to untangle her nerves by crossing her legs, but the space under the desk was too small and she kicked the chair in front of her. Jamie turned around and looked at her with

eyes that covered half his face. She hadn't meant to kick him, but she was glad she did. When Jamie stared he didn't fool around. He didn't look away until he was ready. Annie mumbled an apology. She was sorry only for the noise she had made. Old Sandbag was sitting at her desk sputtering to herself about noise, noise, noise, while her glasses fell over her nose. Annie was surprised her hair didn't stand on end. She liked Old Sandbag well enough, but she was a curious lady. Sandbag never stared at her, not even at the funeral. She had even avoided looking at her. God only knows she had made enough noise for her to look . . .

The bell half-interrupted Annie's thought. She stretched her legs and then followed the top of Jamie's curly head into the locker room. A shiver ran through her whole body as she left the warm classroom. She wanted to go back there now, and sit near the stove and think, maybe sleep for a while. But the promise she had made to her father sat upright in her tired mind. He would be waiting for her to come to the gas station. She wondered if he would catch her in his arms the way he always did.

Someone grabbed Annie's arm to keep her from falling. "Annie, hurry up! It's time to go! I'll meet you at the exit."

It was Patsy waiting to walk home with her. Annie's mind screamed out at her, "Go away. Don't touch me. Don't even say anything. Just go away."

But she didn't say it out loud. Pressed up against the locker door she got ready to go home. Boys were still shuffling with boots and schoolbags and she was still getting pushed and shoved. It was harder and harder for her to hurry.

Why did she have to hurry anyway? And why did her father want her to go to the gas station? She was big enough to walk home by herself. She was even big enough to cook supper alone. Nothing was going to happen to her when she walked down Mill Road; but he had been hard on her and she wanted to know why, now that she thought about it.

Patsy was getting anxious. She pushed her way back into the locker room and bounded over to Annie. She grabbed her school bag and her arm, "Let's go home."

And Annie followed, still holding one red boot in her extra hand. They scrambled down the stairs with a herd of boys led by Jamie in front of them and giggly girls pushing from the back. At the exit, Annie turned around to see

if Lou Ann was with them. She thought somewhere in the back of her mind that Lou Ann's nose would stand out in the crowd, but she couldn't see anything over all the heads. Patsy let go of Annie's arm so she could put her boot on. Old Sandbag's voice rang out from the top of the stairs. "What's all the fuss about down there?"

But when she looked down her nose through her bifocals and saw Annie, she walked up two stairs and disappeared. She was certainly a curious lady.

Since it had snowed the roads were like the horse trails in back of Annie's house. Patsy was plowing in front of her, laughing when she fell. Annie felt Patsy look at her every once in a while to see if she were smiling too. But she didn't feel like it, not even to please her friend. The snow was heavy, and she could see her father's gas station and how it would look with snow on the pumps.

Patsy fell once more on purpose and Annie stopped in front of her. She felt like kicking her for having so much fun. She stayed there with her hands by her side, frozen, and watched Patsy lie there enjoying the sensation the cold snow was sending through her body. Laughing, Patsy picked herself up and shook from her straight blond hair the snow that had stuck. Annie said nothing and started to walk in front of her. She felt she was taking something away from Patsy, robbing her of her fun, but she still couldn't say anything that was nice. She couldn't say anything at all.

Annie looked at Patsy sideways. She was kicking snow and thinking. Annie knew that. She was probably trying to think of something to say. The time was going by so slowly. It had taken ten minutes to get this far, but it was because of all the snow. They couldn't run or skip or do anything to make them go faster. Annie wished Patsy would stay quiet, but she wanted to hear something. She was afraid when things were so quiet.

"Annie!" Patsy startled her and everything inside her turned somersaults. "Annie, we ought to stay outa school for a day. We could go build an igloo or something . . . Wouldn'tcha think, I mean wouldn'tcha think they'd do something about what they call roads in this place? Some one of these days, we won't come to school. We'll go to the diary and hang out there all day and drink sodas and get fatter and fatter until the plows get good and ready to make way for us. Wouldn't that be exciting to have the headmaster after us?"

Annie only half listened as she felt Patsy's hand gestures cutting the wind. She was thinking about her father. She wasn't going to meet him, she decided. She wanted to go home by herself. It wouldn't be dark when she got there. Besides, there were neighbors who could hear her yell if anything happened; but nothing was going to happen because she wouldn't let it.

Patsy broke into Annie's thought. "I asked you three times what you thought of my idea."

Annie looked up to answer and fell on her face in the snow. She felt like staying there forever. She felt as though she would never get up again. The gas station was just down the street. It would be closing soon, but she wasn't going. She didn't want to walk anymore. Let her father find her here if he wanted to. She would show him.

Patsy was laughing at her and Annie felt sick. She swallowed hard and dug her mittened hand into the snow until her fingers ached with the cold . . . I'm not going to meet him. I'm not! Annie was yelling frantically to herself. She wanted to cry, but her eyes wouldn't even water. She heard Patsy's laugh again.

"Hey are you still alive? I mean are you going to get outa that snow so we can go home half dry anyway? C'mon I'll give you my hand, lazy!"

Of course she was alive. What a stupid question to ask. She didn't want Patsy's help. Up until now, who was always the one to give advice? She wanted things to be the way they used to be with Patsy listening to all her adventures. She closed her eyes and tried to believe that Patsy wasn't there, but when she opened them again, there she was ready to tug at her arm. She gave up and held out her hand. She mumbled a thank you and they were walking again toward the dairy and the gas station and Annie's house.

They could see the lights from the stores on Main Street and the little lights on the cars. Patsy hummed and swung her pocket-book against her leg. They were coming to the "love tree" where Annie's and Patsy's names had been carved on Valentine's Day a few weeks before. Annie remembered how excited they had been when they found their names that day. Actually she had found them first. But when they passed now, only Patsy stopped to look and exclaim about the names that were still there, even after all the snow. It all seemed so silly now, and Annie felt nothing. She knew her father's gas station was near. She knew he was there looking for her,

maybe getting worried, but she was going home when she left Patsy. She wished they were in front of Patsy's house now.

Patsy ran to catch up. Annie knew she was angry with her for not talking all the way home. She wished she could fly the few more minutes it would take to get to Patsy's house. Mrs. Clark would be sitting at the window, busy with knitting, while she was waiting for them to come. Everyday she invited Annie in to have milk and cookies with Patsy, but today she hated Mrs. Clark, almost as much as she hated Patsy. She hated her cookies too. Her mother made much better cookies than Mrs. Clark. Now there was only Mrs. Clark to make the best cookies, but Annie wasn't going to let her get away with that. She would make batches and batches until they were perfect and then everyone would say that Annie made cookies like her mother's and they were better than Mrs. Clark's best batches. She wondered if there were any left in the cookie jar at home. She wanted her mother's cookies, not Mrs. Clark's and she was going straight home to get them. She wasn't going to the gas station. For once she was going to do what she wanted. Home was where she belonged, no matter what anyone said.

They were at the dairy window now. Patsy was rubbing the glass with her hands so they could see. Jamie was there with his friends, Joe and Goggles. Annie liked Jamie for his friends. He had some smart ones and some dumb ones, and he was right in the middle. That was the place to be if you had to be anywhere. Annie knew Patsy wanted to go in. Secretly, she wanted to go in too, but she couldn't, not even if the sodas were free. She wished Patsy would say something. She was hurt, but at least she could say so or something!

Patsy surprised her again. "Annie! Oh, please let's go in. Cherry sodas are special today. Oh, c'mon, Annie. You've been really awful to me all day and I want to go in, please."

Cherry sodas were Annie's favorite. Why did they have to have cherry sodas when she had to go home? She felt herself slipping. She couldn't go. No, wouldn't go. That sounded more final. She was afraid to say no to Patsy, but she had to. She couldn't even say she was sorry for today or anything. She smiled a sick smile and said, "You go. I have to be right home."

When Annie turned around and looked back, Patsy was in the doorway looking after her. Annie waved, but she didn't know why.

She was glad she left Patsy at the dairy. There would be no Gertie Clark to bother her and no Clark cat for her to sneeze at. There would only be home. That was what she wanted now.

Annie was a little happy as she put her hands in her pockets and crossed the street to the big intersection where Mill and Pond met Main Street. Mill Road was the first street Annie would come to that she crossed again. She was glad because she wouldn't even have to stop at Pond Road where her father's station was.

The cars had big lights on now and the puddles made by the sun were freezing. Annie walked down Mill Road lined with lamp lights that were just coming on. She was thinking about the house and about how nice it would be to have finally done something without being told by your mother or father. She was walking faster now as the lights cast their strange shadows on her coat. The neighborhood cats were out making noise and Annie was getting a little nervous. She had never thought about getting into the house, but her mother had always left the key under the mat. Maybe it would be there. She crossed the street and walked on the side her house was on. She stopped on the covered bridge and looked over into the dark pool below. Water was dripping from the roof, making dull sounds as it hit the snow-covered ice.

Annie shivered. The line of lights had ended just before the bridge, but her house was just a few more down the road. She practically ran to the next house. It had a light on and she was thankful for that. Her house was on the next block, but she looked down and saw complete darkness. Her father's gas station had lights all over it and she could see them across the field to the right of the lighted house. But this was her night to go home. Maybe her father was worried, but he knew where to find her if she didn't meet him at the station. Maybe he would go to the dairy and Patsy would tell him. But Patsy didn't know.

Annie was practically running now. She ran past all the pine trees on Mrs. Taylor's lawn and past the unlighted lamp in Dr. Hadley's front yard. She ran and slipped once on the ice in front of Mrs. Turcott's house. She barely looked anywhere but straight ahead because she was afraid and she wanted to be home.

She was breathing fast and shaking a little when she reached her porch steps. She ran up two at a time and fell on the top step. Why was she so scared when she was old enough to take care of herself? She had never been afraid of the dark before. Why now?

The porch bannister was gray and peeling. This was the part her father always painted last. He had waited so long last fall that the first snow fall covered it. Annie leaned over the bannister to catch her breath. She remembered how happy her father had been about the snow and how her mother had scolded him for having to wait until the spring to paint again. Annie took her scarf and wiped her eyes and nose. Her eyes were watering, but she wasn't crying. She knew she couldn't because she had tried.

She didn't want to go in just yet. The door seemed so big and heavy and she was tired, so she clomped over to the window. She ran her fingers over the window frame. Two spiders had been caught when her father painted and they made lumps on the frame.

Annie was still shaking a little, so she bent over to keep her knees straight. When she looked inside, it was almost completely dark, but a dull light was coming from somewhere. Annie wondered if her father had forgotten to turn out the kitchen light before he had left that morning.

Her eyes were used to the darkness now. She could see the outlines of her mother's sewing basket in a far corner of the room. She had been making Annie's dress for the annual winter carnival. It was dark blue velvet with long sleeves and a collar and oh, it was everything she had ever wanted. Her mother could do it too. She could do anything. Now the machine was Annie's when she could learn to use it.

Annie felt a lump in her throat. She looked on the other side of the room and saw her father's pipes on his desk, the big ones and the little ones he let her smoke when she was a little girl. And there was the fireplace still black. They hadn't had time to clean it since he had told her the story about her grandfather and the hunters. He had gone out to hunt and never came back because one of his friends was helping him over a fence and his gun went off by accident.

The story had made her sad and that night she dreamt that her grandfather had come to visit her.

Annie stopped thinking and fixed her eyes on the wall. She saw her mother's favorite photograph of her father, walking alone in the field behind the house. She had colored it with oil paints and they had all agreed that it was a masterpiece.

She turned away from the window. The lump in her throat ached and she couldn't

stand it any longer. The porch creaked when she moved and the tears ran down her cheeks. She wiped them off with her sleeves and looked around the porch. She saw her father's shovel he had left out from the last big snow storm. Her mother had always put away his things. What would happen now? If only Patsy or someone were there to talk to, it would be easier. Her father was waiting for her and maybe he was really worried. Maybe he thought she had drowned. Maybe he went looking for her and fell in too. He might even be more scared than she was.

She couldn't think any more. She took one big leap from the landing to the bottom step and cut across the field, falling down all over her boots. She felt bruised all over but she didn't care. She could still see the lights of her father's station. Maybe he was still there waiting for her. She hoped he wouldn't be angry with her. He had yelled only once, when she and Patsy unhitched the raft from the landing and floated out to the middle of the pond to play Tom Sawyer. The neighbors had worked hard to pull them in with a rope. It was almost too much to run all this way. Annie was

out of breath and thought she didn't have any more. But she kept running. She ran past the pond and past the foolish ducks that never left for the winter. Oh, those nutty ducks. And she ran past all the bare trees in Mrs. Farnham's apple orchard and past all the snow-covered storage sheds. There wasn't time to be scared. It was her father she was thinking about. He had to be there. He just had to.

She ran the rest of the way to the gas station and tried to call him. She formed the words again and again but she couldn't hear them.

She ran to the front and pounded on the glass door. She could hear a voice saying, "Wait a minute! I'm coming."

She waited for the longest minute she had ever spent. Finally, her father opened the door and filled up the whole frame. He looked at Annie with kind, tired eyes, his grayish hair half-hidden by a cap. Then he swooped her up in his arms and swung her around. "Well how was school today, my little Annie?"

There were thousands of things she wanted to tell him. Maybe in the spring she could go home by herself when it stayed light longer.

Our Father...

Kathleen Babineau, '71

You know there was never enough time to be little. We grew too fast, learned a lot, but lost something, too. Were you the one we left behind when we wrapped our arms around a clock, and started to say our prayers to pennies and power? If you're the one...

who art in heaven...

when did we lock you there? Some yesterday-people remember when you walked to work with them, and yours was the last voice that hung in the night. Now we run too fast even for God to catch up, and voices can't rise above the clicking of machines and hearts. Yet, if we murmur...

hallowed be your name...

it's because we're using it to kill people and tell lies and fill yawning holes in our conversation. Boredom and bombs — your name is in each. Like us, you have no face. And so we can use your name to bless our sneezes and sins. Like us, you're not quite real, and so we're not afraid of your pain. But still we pray that...

your kingdom come...

to where nothing matters but small worlds and week-end loves. Monday-to-Friday; nine-to-five — you can play at being king. That's when the rest of us build our fantasies, too. But on the week-ends we're too busy to worry about an old man with a yellowing beard or his skinny son. Our Saturday golf games and Sunday drinks prevent us from becoming too frustrated with the maze of living. You'd do well to find yourself a good caddy before you came — it helps improve one's game, you know. Besides, what would we ever do with a place as big as yours? We'd be even more lost, and somehow angels' wings would seem too white.

And if we ask that...

your will be done on earth as it is in heaven... where would you even start? With screaming

mouths or limp hands? With garbage or children? With building everything up again, or just letting it rot? Even God's breath couldn't blow away all the shredded clouds we've left soaking in the gutter. For now, though...

give us this day our daily bread...

after we have vomited pills and slogans and broken promises. Maybe we're starting to feel that swollen bellies on black children are ugly. And blank stares from too-soon-old faces cry hunger, too. We're walking alone now under a popcorn sky. Somehow, bread would feel so sure and safe. And maybe we'd find someone with whom to share it. But really, Lord...

forgive us our trespasses...

because we'll never know how to forgive ourselves. Maybe when we lost you, we lost a part of ourselves, too — that part which would have let us accept ourselves, instead of deserting our cellophane souls to the tinsel men. And will you take care of us...

as we forgive those who
trespass against us...

or can God throw a bomb, too? Or paint his face with condescending smiles? Or hold out one hand, while the other is raised in the universal, phallic gesture of greeting?

and lead us not into temptation...

Maybe tomorrow's tomorrow will be better — for now help us with today. Teach us to walk again, even if we have to hold your hand, at first. Besides, our world has turned into a dirty movie that we've already sat through nineteen times. Something different now, Lord. Something better.

but deliver us from evil...

because we're almost lost. Soon there will be nothing, nothing. Nothing at all — just a small dying till we even forget our names.

but deliver us from evil...

for ever and ever and ever...



Susan Fallon, '70

Lingering last goodbyes.
TRAVELING?

Yes.

Our goodness rates
a trip apiece.

APART?

No.

Defying time and distance
WE SEEK THE SAME SUN.

Kathleen M. Sullivan, '71

